

Copyright

by

Kaitlyn Marie Aylward

2013

**The Thesis Committee for Kaitlyn Marie Aylward
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:**

Good Girl / Bad Girl

**APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Supervisor:

Susan Mickey

Richard Isackes

Katie Dawson

Good Girl / Bad Girl

by

Kaitlyn Marie Aylward, B.F.A.

Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2013

Dedication

To Susan Mickey, for her constant support, encouragement, and belief in my passion for Good Girl/ Bad Girl.

To Katie Dawson, for her patience, enthusiasm, and ability to make me believe I can be a leader.

And to Stephanie Brunia, who went beyond the duties of my teaching assistant at Penland to become my trusted photo mentor.

Acknowledgements

Good Girl / Bad Girl would not have been possible without the involvement of the 51 women who participated in the interviews and photographs. I am honored to have shared their stories and gained their trust.

Equally important are the donors who supported my exhibit during The Co-op presents The Cohen New Works Festival. Without them the exhibit would not exist.

Abstract

Good Girl / Bad Girl

Kaitlyn Aylward, M.F.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2013

Supervisor: Susan Mickey

Good Girl / Bad Girl asks women to define the good girls and bad girls in respect to their clothing. Participants are women who live in either New Mexico or Texas and identify as one or more of the following groups: New Mexican, Mexican, Native American, Sorority women, and Cowgirls. Participants were interviewed and photographed in their homes and places of work. Good Girl/ Bad Girl was exhibited during the 2013 The Co-op Presents the Cohen New Works Festival. A selection of twenty-one images were displayed in addition to audio from the interviews.

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations	x
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Meeting Mimi	1
Chapter 2: The Essential.....	4
Research Question	4
The Costume Designer	4
Participant Selection	5
Project Guidelines	6
Community Sub-groups.....	7
Chapter 3: Terminology	8
Bad Girls.....	8
Good Girls	10
Chapter 4: Communities	12
New Mexican.....	12
Cowgirls	13
Mexican	14
Sorority	16
Native American.....	17
Chapter 5: Biblical Antiquity	19
Good and Bad Girls in the Bible	19
Chapter 6: Community Sub-Group 1 External Influences	22
Family	22
Culture	25
Gender Roles	27
Economics	30
Education	31

Outsiders	32
Geography	34
Situational Rules: Native/Western.....	36
Situational Rules: Fiesta	37
Situational Rules: Work	38
Situational Rules: Church	39
Judgments	40
Respect	42
Admiration	43
Chapter 7: Community Sub-Group 2 Internal Influences	46
Body Image	46
Race..	47
Sexual Identity	50
Religion	54
Generations	55
Chapter 8: Questioning	57
Interpreting Answers	57
The Costume Designers Responsibilities	59
Chapter 9: Photography and Costume Design.....	60
Chapter 10: Both Good and Bad	61
Chapter 11: Conclusion	62

Appendix A Good Girl/Bad Girl Promotional Poster	63
Appendix B Mexican Participant Photo	64
Appendix C Sorority Participant Photo	65
Appendix D Cowgirl Participant Photo	66
Appendix E Native American Participant Photo	67
Appendix F New Mexican Participant Photo	68
Bibliography	69
Interviews	71
Vita ..	74

List of Illustrations

Illustration 1: Mimi with duct tape	2
Illustration 2: SlutWalk protest sign	58

Chapter 1: Introduction

MEETING MIMI

I met Mimi at her home in Tucumcari, New Mexico on a cool autumn day. The three hours of driving came to a completion when I passed three cattle gates, six buffalo and pulled into the long driveway of a rustic home. Mimi and her husband owned and operated the cattle and guest ranch. A watershed, a barn filled with hay, and a pen of cows and calves surrounded the land their home was located on. Mimi introduced herself as I got out of the car. She wore a washed-out red cotton long-sleeve button-down shirt, an army green down vest, a silver belt buckle with the name of her ranch, wrangler jeans, brown steel-toed work boots, and a black cowboy hat with a tan leather band. Mimi, like many of the women I interviewed, didn't think her clothes were special and couldn't understand the interest I had in them. My eye was drawn to the fading sunlight on the landscape set against the colors of her outfit, the attention to cleanliness and detail within this basic work outfit, and the ways in which she repaired her own garments. On the left bottom side of the down vest was a patch of duct tape, covering a hole in the garment.



Illustration 1: Photograph of Mimi's duct tape repair

Mimi was presentable and clean, yet her clothing carried visible signs of her lifestyle and job. Mimi's clothing were authentic; the real deal and as a costume designer this excites me.

The sun was going to set in an hour so photographs happened immediately, followed by the interview. I started all my interview with the same question, "Tell me about yourself, where you're from, and about your family." During our hour and a half long conversation I learned that Mimi was from Sweden and had grown up riding horses in the countryside. Her definition of gender roles focused on the physical and maternal instincts of children. She identified with her father and the gender roles of men as she

defined them.

I associated more with the boys; I wasn't interested in what stuff the girls did. I never had a doll, I always played with animals. So I never...I didn't have much in common with women or with girls, not much to talk about and I guess I was raised like a boy and enjoyed doing boy things with my dad. Woodwork and creating things, and riding horses, and mucking out stalls and most girls they're just talking babies and I don't know, it just didn't interest me.

-Mimi, Cowgirl, New Mexico, 50s

Mimi's story highlighted the complex nature of how gender expectations, family, and lifestyle influence dress. Many women shared Mimi's story, and it is their stories that I investigate in this project.

Chapter 2: The Essential

RESEARCH QUESTION

The questions I present to each woman, to myself, and the reader, is “What is your definition of appropriate and inappropriate dress?” “What are the varying factors that create this definition?” “How do you see yourself within these rules?” The terms good girl and bad girl translate scholarly to mean appropriate and inappropriate. My goal is to dissect each and every one of those previous questions through the answers of 51 different women.

THE COSTUME DESIGNER

As a Costume Designer this project intrigues me for the following reasons. First and foremost, it excites me. Rather than the normative research I do for projects, such as finding photos and text in books and online, this project gave me travel, interviews, and photographs as research. It was truly exciting to have research come alive. Second, getting to know real people rather than characters in a play grounds the design in a new light. It is important to remind myself that there are people living this lifestyle outside of the plays I read. Finding a personal connection to them adds a level of authenticity, sensitivity, and understanding to my designs. I feel a personal connection to these women, and to the characters that they represent on the page.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

The *Good Girl/Bad Girl* project took place over the span of nine months. During this time I traveled between New Mexico and Texas, meeting, interviewing and photographing 51 different women representing a range of identifies including; Native American, Mexican, New Mexican, Sorority and Cowgirl.

Each group chosen represents a community. I define community as a group of people who share something. The Mexican, New Mexican and Native Women belong to a racial community. The Cowgirls are part of a professional community. The sorority women come from a social community. Any women identifying with the three racial communities could also be a part of the social or professional communities. I interviewed women who identified as multiple communities, and asked them to speak as much as they felt comfortable about either community. The participant made the choice if they wanted to be recognized as belonging to more than one community within this project.

My criteria for choosing these specific groups included objectivity, proximity, and aesthetics. I do not identify as a member of any of these groups thus allowing my objectivity as observer and documenter. As I am located in Texas I have access to groups based both in Texas and it's neighboring state New Mexico. The communities chosen contain qualities that I find aesthetically interesting. All five of these cultures are within my sphere of access and have been an aesthetic influence on my artistic growth.

Participants were found through the snowball effect¹. I have personal contacts in both Texas and New Mexico that lead me to my first participants. These women were often connected to me through a second party. When I was finished interviewing one woman, she would give me the name of three more. It was my mission to photograph and interview these women in their most comfortable setting. I chose to meet them at either their homes or place of work.

PROJECT GUIDELINES

It is important to note that I am not a scientist, nor a historian. I am an artist and costume designer. The views expressed in this project are solely the views of the 51 different women I have interviewed. Their opinions and my synthesis and discussion of their words is not meant to be taken as scientific fact, rather a artistically geared cultural exploration.

I am a costume designer and the focus of this project is on clothing. The accompanying interviews with each subject were done to understand the motives behind the clothing and their definition of appropriate and inappropriate clothing. However, many participants' responses focused on an action rather than the dress. "Respectability involves both appearance and conduct. Her clothing, hairstyle, make-up, and stride signify her status as a reputable young woman."(Laidler/Hunt 664) Therefore certain sections of this paper may not directly mention dress, but are nonetheless an important part of this project. The information that centers on action rather than dress is still

¹ A situation in which something increases in size or importance at a faster and faster rate

important research that I, as a costume designer, value.

COMMUNITY SUB-GROUPS

What do the terms good girl and bad girl mean? When I analyzed the interview data the sub-groups of external and internal influences emerged. External Influences encompasses family, culture, gender roles, economics, education, outsiders, geography, situational rules (western/native, Fiesta, work and church), respect, and admiration. Internal Influences contains body image, race, sexual identity, religion, and generations.

In this thesis I will delve into the racial, professional and social groups definition of good and bad girl as they related to these sub-groups. Each of the communities will be introduced through a summary of knowledge gained from the project, leading into the specific breakdown of these groups within the subgroups. The ultimate question of good and bad dress will be broken down theoretically at the conclusion of this paper.

Chapter 3: Terminology

This section discusses the key terms used throughout this project and their definitions among the 51 participants.

BAD GIRLS

It seems like we label people if someone's very conservative in the way that they are we label them as good and if somebody is more open and the way they dress and they are very seductive maybe in the way they dress some might label them as bad.

-Diane, New Mexican, New Mexico, 50s

To each woman I posed the question "What is your definition of the terms good girl and bad girl?" The first response to this question was always the same. Good girls are more conservative and less promiscuous, while bad girls are wild and sexual. Sexuality was often the initial shallow representation of a good or bad girl. While it may be the initial answer, it is not the sole defining factor.

The bad girl character was met with varying definitions with the first being labeled the "bad-ass." This bad girl was outspoken and opinionated. Her reputation as a bad girl was both a good and a bad thing. It spoke to her willful character that some would admire while others found off-putting. Krystle, a young New Mexican woman, spoke of being labeled a bad girl herself because "I tend to be very opinionated and vocal and it's just who I am."

The counterpart to the bad girl definition was in relation to her sexuality. Identified by participants through her visual traits, bad girls were described as wearing heavy makeup, having tattoos, and were viewed overall as bold. Pam, a Cowgirl from New Mexico in her mid-50', visually identified the bad girl through makeup. When she saw "someone wearing black lip-gloss I think rebellious, and probably enjoys being seen that way."

The third understanding of a bad girl wasn't about her dark makeup or her outspoken personality. She could simply be perceived as messy, indicating that she didn't care to follow anyone's rules of appropriate dress. Autumn, a young Taos Pueblo Native American woman living in New Mexico voiced her opinion that "I'm not saying that a bad girl cannot have well made things but normally when you hear bad girl, you don't care."

Linda M. Scott, author of Fresh Lipstick: Redressing Fashion and Feminism, poignantly comments on the issue on non-dress. "Failure or refusal to groom communicates resistance, carelessness, or incapacity. Thus, it is never possible simply to 'opt out' of the discourse of dress. No one can dress in a way that signifies nothing" (Scott 12)

As a costume designer I resonate with Linda Scott's statement. By actively not making a dress decision you are still engaging in a choice. There is no such thing as a non-costume. All representation associated with the body onstage is costume.

GOOD GIRL

When asked to define the good girl most women fell silent. There was not much to say other than to repeat the term good girl, while adding sweet and nice.

A good girl or somebody who there isn't really a lot of comment other than oh she looks so nice would be somebody who dressed in a more conservative, not necessarily shirts to the throat, but you know a more conservative manner appears to have more respect for themselves.

-Debbie, New Mexican, New Mexico, 50s

The flip side of the good girl turned to a disadvantage. Participants who were labeled as good girls encountered attitude from their peers. The thought being that they were such good girls, they were now too good for anyone else. Erika, a Jemez Pueblo Native American woman in her 30s, reminisced about her experience as being labeled the good girl during high school. "I was more to myself and I would just do what I needed to do. So people thought 'oh well she's stuck up she doesn't want to deal with people' because I wasn't totally out there."

Erika's sentiment of a good girl having a negative connotation is another layer to the discussion of whether anyone is truly good and bad without the presence of a community to judge. As a costume designer Erika's description of good girl allows me

another way into viewing the good girl character. Her example simply gives me another choice to represent and a new light to see the good girl character in.

Chapter 4: Communities

This chapter serves as an introduction to the five communities I have included in this Thesis. Each section provides a summarized view of the overarching issues discussed within each community.

NEW MEXICAN

A good girl is somebody who helps in the household and does things and is responsible, that's a good girl and the bad girl is the one the girl that's carefree and having fun and enjoying herself. Oh she's the bad girl because she never takes responsibility.

-Diana, New Mexican, New Mexico, 50s

I interviewed 13 New Mexican women between the age groups of 20s to 50s. Diana was one of these women. Diana was part of a member of the Fiesta Council² in Santa Fe, NM. I found noticeable differences in the answers generationally within the New Mexican women. Linked experiences from many of the older New Mexican women included a respect for family, a place for religion, and a disapproval of youth today. Women from the older generation shared a common experience of being raised by grandparents and living in a rural setting. Both generations offered similar judgments about dress but the older generation was subjected to harsher treatment based on clothing behavior. While the younger generation knew what was good and bad through verbal

² Fiesta – An annual event that occurs in New Mexico the first week of September. It marks the re-colonization of New Mexico lead by Don Diego De Vargas of Spain.

communication, the older generation learned through the harsh reality of child abuse and poverty.

Your expectations were very clear you knew that if you stepped outside of the guidelines as to what was acceptable behavior you were gonna get smacked. There was none of this child abuse you know. You got smacked and you didn't do it again.

-Debbie, New Mexican, New Mexico, 50s

COWGIRLS

I interviewed 11 Cowgirls from both New Mexico and Texas between the age groups of 20s to 50s. Judith was one of these women, stating “when you're pissed because you got blood on your favorite hat, and it's not something you wear in public, it's your work hat you know. Tell me then when it's real.” Her attitude of the Cowgirl lifestyle focused on authenticity. Her quote demonstrates a Cowgirls definition of clothing as related to her work.

The term Cowgirl applies to all 11 women, though their situations and backgrounds are all very different. Some Cowgirls I interviewed grew up in rural landscapes and participated in Rodeo. Others grew up riding English style³ and later transitioned to the Cowgirl lifestyle. Last are the women, like Judith, who were born into ranching families and saw themselves as the true “Cowboy.” To Judith the term Cowgirl

³ A style of riding that features a flat English saddle and requires riders to use both hands on the reins

was not simply the gender counterpart to Cowboy; it was a different job description.

True ranch raised type women, Cowboy. I don't like the word Cowgirl because that is not a true representation of what a Cowboy type girl is. I day worked, I worked with the men. I was a Cowboy.

-Judith, Cowgirl, New Mexico, 30s

These women were strong, independent, resourceful, and practical. Cowgirls have their list of priorities, and at the top of that list is function for work. A cowgirl's life is physically demanding and includes working with animals, tending the land, and being self-sufficient. Their clothing met the needs of their lifestyle. Clothing that did not was viewed as frivolous.

MEXICAN

I interviewed 9 Mexican women from The Valley and Round Rock, TX. Raquel, a Mexican woman in her 50s, expressed a disconnect between the quality of life she and her children had experienced. "Our kids cannot relate, they don't know, they cannot relate to anything we went through." Raquel was included in a community of the older generation. I was fortunate to speak with herself and her friends, as well as her daughter and daughters' friends. From these parallel conversations the discussion of appropriate and inappropriate were broken across the generations. The assets of one generation

financially and educationally were not shared by the previous generation. The older generations stayed in the cities where they were raised, regardless of the racial or economic changes that occurred. The younger women did occasionally leave for educational purposes, but all that I spoke with have plans on returning to their hometown. The younger generation disagreed with the socially accepted gender roles of their community, particularly men's treatment of women as inferior and the acceptance of infidelities. While the younger generation only spoke of these issues, the older generations lived them by being cheated on by their husbands. The older generation was not the ones to speak about the infidelity. This knowledge came from their daughters. The older generation did not talk with me about their romantic and family relationships as they currently were, but rather as they had been. They spoke of their lives when they were teenagers, expressing the dress and behavioral restrictions family put on them. The younger generation spoke freely in comparison to their mother's politely worded and delicately crafted responses to my questions. The daughters showed willingness to not only talk about taboo subjects, but expressed disagreement with their mother's acceptance of gender roles. While the older generation of Mexican women accepted this imbalance of power and respect between them and the men in their lives, the younger Mexican women chose another route.

SORORITY

I interviewed 12 Sorority women from 5 different sorority houses in both New Mexico and Texas. Four of the sorority houses were associated with the National PanHellenic Council.⁴ Three of the five sororities had cultural recognition though Latina, Asian, and Jewish participants. Sorority women most often came to a sorority because their mothers had participated, and/or they were looking for a community. Gloria is a member of an Asian-based sorority and she cited the inclusive nature of a community as reason for joining.

They share similar values and you just want a group of friends that that will stay friends with you for a while. For me it was the girls that attracted me. I said I want to be friends with them; I want to be a part of this group
-Gloria, Sorority, Texas, 20s

Sorority women come with many different racial and cultural backgrounds, yet they function as their own culture once they are inducted. The majority of the women I interviewed were currently active in Sorority life, and therefore in the 20s age group. Each woman's background influenced their choice of sorority, and inevitably women from similar ethnic, religious, or ethical backgrounds found each other in Sorority life. Sorority offers a unique look at human-made culture that could include women from any of the other 4 groups

⁴ The local coordinating and governing organization for women's sororities

NATIVE AMERICAN

Lakota men don't cut their hair. You're never supposed to cut your hair.

That's a sign of beauty and strength. But you then get into modern culture where that's considered feminine.

-Alex, Native American-Lakota, New Mexico, 20s

I interviewed 7 Native American women in New Mexico and Texas. These women belong to the following tribes: Lakota, Comanche, Taos Pueblo, Jemez Pueblo and Choctaw. The Native American women I spoke with were in the age bracket of 20-30s and had never lived on a reservation. Native American women were my most complex group. Native Americans face additional cultural issues as opposed to the other 4 groups by being the only culture that simultaneously is a part of and still separate from western culture. For Native American women geography was a defining factor in their lives. Living on or off the reservation had a huge impact in how they were raised, how they were viewed within their Native community, and how they viewed Western culture. Native Americans have their own government, their own land, and their own laws that are separate from Western culture like no other group living in the United States. A true understanding of the basic issues that impact Native culture today are needed in order to speak about appropriate and inappropriate definitions within Native Culture. My conversations with Native American women were the longest, the richest, and truly the most eye opening. It is important to note at this point that the term "Native

American” is a term used to describe a large and widely varying group of people. It is similar to the term “European.” Each tribe is diverse with different languages and traditions. It is important to note this now, because although my group is categorized as Native American, each women I spoke to can only speak to the knowledge of her own tribe.

These compilations of the five communities serve as an introduction to their values and lifestyles. All five of these communities bring with them their own cultural and community attitudes to the definition of appropriate and inappropriate dress.

Chapter 5: Biblical Antiquity

GOOD AND BAD GIRLS IN THE BIBLE

Lets shift from the modern exploration of good and bad girls to a historical lens. In biblical antiquity the good and bad girls existed. The bible gives conflicting examples of how a woman should act, dress, and break the rules while still being considered acceptable.

The biblical stories of women range from the expected to the surprising. We learn about the women who sacrifice themselves for the good of another, protect their family, and serve their husbands. Stories of women who break the rules, manipulate others, and act in ways that were only acceptable for men. Both types of women have the capacity to be deemed a good girl by biblical standards.

I have chosen to share two examples of the good girl in Biblical society. The first story is of Ruth⁵. Ruth is my expected definition of a good girl. Ruth is a recent widow with only her mother in-law left. Naomi wishes to return to her homeland of Bethlehem. She tells Ruth not to come, since Ruth is a Moabite and would be leaving her home. Ruth shows great devotion to Naomi by holding her loyalty to Naomi above that of her homeland. It doesn't hurt that Naomi is an Ephrathite from Bethlehem, and the God of this bible favors Ephrathites. The reader of the bible sees Ruth's abandonment of her hometown and culture as favorable.

The second example of the good girl is Rebekah. Rebekah and the profit Isaac

⁵ Book of Ruth 1

have twin sons, Jacob and Esau. Although they are twins, Esau is technically the older sibling since he was born first, giving him the power of birthright. While Esau is the father's favorite, God speaks to Rebekah and tells her it is Jacob who will lead their people and she must trick her husband into giving Jacob the blessing that brings about God's will. Rebekah disguises her son Jacob in the scent and furs of Esau, sends him to Isaac on his deathbed, and ensures Jacob's blessing. Though Rebekah tricks her husband and strips her son Esau of his birthright, she is viewed as a good girl because she does all of this to bring about God's will.

Sharon Grady, an author who specializes in theatre in education and community outreach, states in her book Drama and Diversity "The status of an individual's membership in a group is measured against what is perceived to be the norm or prevailing or hegemonic culture." (Grady 10) The overall sentiment I have concluded from the stories of these twelve women during Biblical Antiquity is that every action may be challenged by what is deemed appropriate to society as long as the reason serves God. Although many of the women in the Bible acted in ways our modern eye would classify as bad, they were alternatively deemed good girls. Their actions were deemed by the Bible to be in God's favor and therefore these women were cast in the good girl light. What this tells me is that the intentions of the individual, the situation, and who is judging them can skew the good girl/bad girl judgment. God judges the women of the Bible, and those that act in deceitful ways to bring about God's will are good. Those same women,

those same stories and actions, could just as easily be deemed “bad” by opposing religions and Gods at the time. The truth from the Bible is the viewer is truly the one who has the power to determine whether someone is seen as good or bad, and that good and bad are completely subjective or relative.

Chapter 6: Community Sub-group 1

External Influences

In the following two chapters I will speak to the participants' responses as organized within the two main sub-groups of internal influences and external influences.

FAMILY

Familial expectations of dress that was appropriate and inappropriate were the driving factors for Mexican and New Mexican women. "We can't rely on somebody else to correct behaviors or instill behaviors. It has to come from the home" states Debbie, a New Mexican participant belonging to the older generation. Herself and others in the New Mexican and Mexican communities believe that family taught what was good and bad, and you obediently lived within the world that created. Family values were motivated by religious beliefs and gender roles. "They [women] evaluate their own mothers, and sometimes themselves, in relation to this traditional good girl versus bad girl dichotomy." (Laidler/Hunt 668) Both groups spoke of a woman's role within the family, and the importance of her reputation. The older generations were taught that they had a responsibility to respect and contribute to their families. They did this by working in the home, assisting their mothers and grandmothers, and attending church. The thought being that if they were busy in the home, they wouldn't have time for trouble. These rules of right and wrong were not up for discussion. They were a truth that was instilled in the older generation. This truth was carried throughout their lives and manifested itself in their clothing behavior as adults. Participants spoke to the rules of

dress they had learned during their elementary years and acknowledged that these rules of appropriate and inappropriate dress continued to influence their dress decisions as adults. Lucille, a New Mexican woman in her 50s, commented, "You had to be obedient. They didn't give you a choice. You had to do it. You know so, never went against what they expected of you."

The label of appropriate dress within these cultures became not only about the individual, but the family as a whole. The New Mexican and Mexican women believed that your reputation affected the respectability of your family, specifically your father. Within the Mexican culture participants expressed that respect for their father was the rule within the household. They recounted times when their father and brothers were served meals first and they had to wait to eat until the men had finished. As daughters, the older generation felt the gaze of the entire community on them. This perceived agency of community representation seemed to cause an acute awareness of their expected dress and behavior within and outside of the home. Therefore, the Mexican women felt a pressure to be the good girl constantly. It was just as likely for their behavior or dress to be scolded by a family member as by a community member.

In Mexican culture "the father" represents the family. In a range of Native American cultures represented by the participants I spoke with, family is represented by "the mother." Two of the women I spoke with were sisters and part of the Lakota tribe in South Dakota. In the Lakota tribe the children's last name is passed down through the matrilineal line. These two sisters identified their heritage through their grandmother's

family.

Since most Lakota stuff is passed down through a matrilineal line there's more of a significance in what the mother does, where she's from, her bloodline, who her dad is, what her name is, who she marries. My whole history on my dad's side is recorded through his mother.

-Alex, Lakota Native American, New Mexico, 20s

This often leads to large gaps in genealogy. These women from the Lakota tribe knew the family tree in relation to the women of their family, but men were often left out. They did not know if their grandfathers were from their tribe, from South Dakota, or even Native. In a culture that is becoming increasingly concerned with defining a person's native-ness by their percentage of native blood, this gap in family history leaves many unanswered personal heritage questions. It also shows a reversal of gender appreciation. In Mexican culture where the family and family name has a direct correlation to the father, Lakotas display an alternative family structure. In Lakota culture the children are associated with the mother. It is the mothers name they take and it is the mother that they represent.

CULTURE

The Native American participants I spoke with did not live on reservations. While

they physically lived within Western culture, their heritage was still firmly rooted in Native culture. They visited their families who did live on Reservations and participated in special occasions in their traditional Native dress. Those in education were studying Native American law, tradition, or history. They expressed a difficulty of living in two worlds with opposing rules. All women interviewed expressed the belief that Native people cherish those who stay on reservations, and see it as a sign of embracing their Native culture regardless of tribe. Brittany, a member of the Lakota tribe from Santa Fe, New Mexico in her mid-20s expressed the present concern for “Either going away and losing part of the culture, or coming back and wanting to change it.” Native American culture has a history of being persecuted and stripped of their tradition. It is for these reasons that Native Americans deeply value what tradition remains.

Someone who has connections both on and off the reservation will not necessarily see their educational or career achievements be valued. Measures of success by Western standards are often quite different from measures of success within the Native culture.

My dad's name translates to 'has no horses' and even though that's a family name it's considered a real negative. Having no horses' means you are broke and totally pathetic in the Lakota culture. Doesn't matter that he has a nice car in white culture, in Lakota culture the status symbol of not having horses is a fail

-Alex, Lakota Native American, New Mexico, 20s

Native customs that translate into appropriate behavior, and therefore become associated with the good girl standard can be at odds with what Western society considers a good girl. The following quote from Alex speaks to this difficulty of balance between her and her sisters' Native societal rules applied in a Western environment.

Brittany got into trouble in college because she didn't even talk in class. Lakotas don't believe in saying stuff unless it seems not obvious, otherwise it's offensive. So if I say, 'this bedspread is white' that would be mean because I would be implying that you didn't recognize it was white. So in school she would have a really hard time because she thought since she read [the reading assignment] she wasn't going to say anything because it was obvious. Professors would assume she hadn't done the work or didn't want to talk so she'd always lose participation points.

-Alex, Lakota Native American, New Mexico, 20s

Native women living outside of the reservation who aim to honor their culture often felt they were in a bind. Our society asks them to make a choice between Western expectations and Native tradition. When they don't choose the Western way, yet live within a Western society, they are punished. They are labeled the "bad girl" due to their

inappropriate behavior. For Brittany inappropriate behavior was not speaking in class, and her punishment came in the form of the disapproval of her professors and a lower grade. Their struggle is unique among the groups of women I interviewed as the Native women expressed a tension from not only Western culture, but often from their own Native American culture. Four of the seven women I interviewed were of mixed race and were all considered half-native. Two were half-Irish, one was half-English, and one was half-Black. They all spoke of a struggle to be fully accepted by their Native culture and their Western lifestyle. “You just recognize the traits that aren’t that family when you’re with that culture, and you’re like ‘oh this parts different and stands out’, and so you can’t ever fit entirely into either one and I think that’s where a lot of the insecurity came through.” (Alex, Lakota Native American, New Mexico, 20s)

GENDER ROLES

The rules of the older generation were without much choice or understanding of different lifestyles. Many Cowgirls experienced a lack of choice in dress because of the type of work they performed. The following quote from Judith, a Cowgirl in New Mexico, speaks to this choice in dress. “She (my aunt) was one of those prim and proper ladies, do this ladies, do that, pinkies up while you drink kind of a human and we weren’t. We didn’t have that choice.”

Judith recognized a lack of choice in her dress that stemmed from her lifestyle.

Judith worked on a ranch and spent her days in jeans, long sleeve button-downs and cowboy hats. Her priority in dress stemmed from her profession and lifestyle. Her aunt did not share this lifestyle. Judith's aunts' definition of appropriate dress for women not only included a change of dress from pants to skirts, but a change of profession from day-laborer to homemaker. Judith was actively chosen by her father to work for the ranch their family owned, therefore Judith did not feel as if she had a choice in her dress decisions simply because she never had a choice in her professional decisions

In Mexican culture your expectation as a woman was first and foremost instilled through your family. Participants stated that they were taught their roles by watching their mothers.

My mom, she's accomplished a lot more than my dad but she won't accept the fact that she's either equal to her man or above her man. It's like you're always one step below.

-Nathalie, Mexican, Texas, 20s

These rules set by lifestyle and family also became the rules to break. Women who came to the Cowgirl style later in life grew up bucking the rules of dress. When family members scolded them for not wearing skirts, it made their resolve to wear pants stronger.

[My grandmother] had a huge influence on me. In terms of being in

opposition of everything she said. She was a firm believer in dresses and I was a firm believer in pants. I do not know how many times I heard that [pants are] not lady like.

-Katrina, Cowgirl, New Mexico, 50s

In Cowgirl culture traditional gender expectations were heavily in place. Work in the home and family was meant for women, while the work in the outdoors assigned to men. Women who did the work of men, such as Judith, labeled themselves “Cowboys.” Ariel Levy, a feminist writer and author of the book Female Chauvinist Pigs, states in her book “Women who’ve wanted to be perceived as powerful have long found it more efficient to identify with men than to try and elevate the entire female sex to their level” (Levy, 95) Levy suggests that by associating with male culture and definition of the appropriate male that women were more accepted rather than seen as delineating from their gender roles. For the Cowboy type girl, the gender roles became a part of the stated occupation rather than a prescribed position. Judith described the difficulty her father had in realizing that she was a girl.

“My dad didn't know we were female. I remember having cramps and hurting so bad I couldn't function. ‘What's wrong with you?’ ‘Dad nothing’ ‘What's wrong with you?’ ‘I have cramps’ and I remember seeing the look of abject horror across his face when he went ‘Oh my god it's female.’ My dad didn't know we were girls. He had no clue. He still

has trouble with the concept.

-Judith, Cowgirl, New Mexico, 30s

ECONOMICS

Women's issues of economic stability influenced their comments and thinking about appropriate and inappropriate dress. "I never had any issues about [being labeled a bad girl]. I mean, cause most of the time we were on welfare so I just got hand-me downs" stated Paula, a Cowgirl in her 40s living in Texas. For Paula, her lack of money left her without the opportunity to be a bad girl. The choice to be a bad girl included an economic freedom she did not enjoy in her opinion. This idea of having a choice to be bad was consistent in the working-class and lower-income women I interviewed, regardless of their identified community.

We came to town in the summer we weren't allowed to wear shorts because we had enough money to buy full pants. We weren't allowed to wear anything with holes in them because we may be poor but we weren't that poor.

-Judith, Cowgirl, New Mexico, 30s

Clothing holds the power to communicate just how much financial stability you have. For Judith, it was her father's objective to represent his family in a higher economic

status through their clothing choices. Weather was a reasonable situation where women expressed a shift in their definition of appropriate clothing to include bare legs. In Judith's example, perceived economical standing was at odds with weather. This resulted in the importance of economic standing to outweigh the practical dress choices influenced by weather.

EDUCATION

Education in the Native community can be seen as a device that pulls native people away from their culture. Brittany, a member of the Lakota tribe in her mid-20s commented, "with a lot of communities that are impoverished education is a scary thing." In order to receive any level of higher education Native women must leave the reservation. With that departure the chance that she will marry someone non-native is much higher. In addition to creating a physical representation of separation from the reservation through clothing choices, their native blood now has the ability to get phased out of that family and be considered no longer Native.

You're playing into a white persons system ultimately... like law and the judicial system is not Native so therefore you're still playing... You're still doing something different and while you still may be representing Natives and helping them in some way really traditional people will be like 'you're still doing something wrong.'

-Alex, Lakota Native American, New Mexico, 20s

Although many Native women intend to help their Native communities, they were still doing something wrong by playing into white culture and therefore moving away from tradition and becoming less appropriate. There seemed to be a negative judgment regarding Native women who chose to move away from the reservation (even for higher education) and that physical distance became a decisive factor for choices of appropriate behavior/dress.

OUTSIDERS

Within each community there was a sense of belonging. Katrina, a Cowgirl in her 50s from New Mexico, states “Family and tradition are not going to like outsiders.” In the Cowgirl community the outsider is the woman playing the part of a cowgirl through her clothing, without earning that title.

What they (dude ranches⁶) attempt to sell the layman you cannot package and sell 10,000 hours, so there is that element of how much people are lured in to the belief that to can do it with these tools and this philosophy of horsemanship that is [packaged] into multiple hours of training. That is one of the things I am going to say is true of the cowboys and ranchers.

⁶ Dude Ranch – A ranch operated primarily as a vacation resort

You cannot replace the hours of experience with a weekend course.

-Katrina, Cowgirl, New Mexico, 50s

Native women can become strangers within their own culture, defined by whether or not they live on the reservation. The Native American women I spoke with all lived off the Reservation, with close family ties still on the Reservation. Family members on the reservation often wore hand me-downs and whatever else was available. There was not a choice to follow a specific trend or have a favorite color. The women I spoke with were aware of the economic variations between themselves and their relatives who lived on the reservation. They were able to choose what they preferred to wear and cultivated their personal style. It was this style that inevitably visually separated them from their family members during visits on the Reservation. Their clothing singled them out as outsiders and communicated that they had not grown up on the reservation. Brittany, a Lakota Native American living in New Mexico experienced “being a stranger [on the reservation] and I think that the clothes just highlight that even more.”

In sorority life the outsider is the non-member, identified by their lack of knowledge pertaining to sorority dress standards. Morgan, a Sorority member living in New Mexico stated “You can see the difference between freshman who just come in and they don’t have any guidance. We (the sorority) try to instill in our younger people that like you have to look decent.”

GEOGRAPHY

Geography plays a role in our appropriate and inappropriate clothing choices. Where we live affects our selection of long vs. short sleeves, whether it is protection from the sun or snow. For the Cowgirl women they dressed for the geography they desired, rather than the place they were in currently.

Cowgirls recalled the power dress held for them. Many spoke of the places they grew up in and how that differed from where they wanted to be. Three women grew up on the East coast of the United States, and one grew up in Sweden. They wanted to be true American cowgirls and to them that meant moving out West. While they waited and saved money for their move, they continued to dress for their new destination. Their western style dress was a reminder of their goals.

I'd walk around in Boston with my cowboy boots and wranglers. I remember going in some place and taking out my knife and whittling on a stick and people would look at me. I was a real misfit there because in my mind, I so desired to be out here and I wasn't quite there yet.

Mimi, Cowgirl, New Mexico, 50s

While it was completely inappropriate to dress in western style on the East coast, these women did it as a way to stay connected to their goals. Their goal was to move out

of the East Coast or Europe and come to the West where they could dress like a Cowgirl and ride their horses in the environment they'd longed for.

What attracted me was the wide-open spaces here. Cause when you ride in Sweden everything is small pastures and roads and fenced and everything, and I'd watch these western movies you know, Just go for miles galloping across the prairie you know and it's like I want to go out there and do that

-Mimi, Cowgirl, New Mexico, 50s

Native American culture sees geography in a pivotal way. People who stay on the reservation are valued, and viewed as more appropriate than those who leave. The land that the Native people own also holds another, more spiritual purpose.

You have this white religious culture that says people were expelled from their Garden of Eden and don't get to live in their sacred space, and that's not the case at all for Lakotas. We know where our sacred space is. It's the badlands; it's right by where we live.

-Alex, Lakota Native American, New Mexico, 20s

Living close to this sacred space creates a link to tradition and culture, validating

the appropriateness and good girl association of the woman to her community. Alex communicated this through the sentiment of “Being a part of that land is a general feeling of appropriateness and the further you move away from that the further you get away from the more inappropriate you become.”

SITUATIONAL RULES

In this section of my thesis I will discuss how situational rules emerges as a key theme in my analysis for Good *Girl/Bad Girl*. The specific dress events described by the participants included situations where native and western rules clashes, clothes for the workplace, and Fiesta.

SITUATIONAL RULES: NATIVE & WESTERN EVENTS

Native women who chose to live off the reservation experienced conflict between the rules of dress for Native and Western culture.

When I graduated from high school all the girls had to wear these white robes. I said I didn’t want to because I was going to wear my traditional dress, which was entirely appropriate for a major ceremony such as graduation in Native culture. I had a few people say that it was absolutely not appropriate and I would be trying to get attention or I would take away from the mass.

-Alex, Lakota Native American, New Mexico, 20s

Something that was entirely appropriate for the Native culture, wearing your traditional dress to a life changing ceremony, was not appropriate to a Catholic and Educational community.

Whereas Native women have juggled the rules of their native and western world, the Cowgirls chose to dress for one purpose consistently. Gracey, a Cowgirl in her 30s from Texas, said “I dress the exact same. The guy at the convenience store laughs, “you have no clothes; you wear the same thing.”

Cowgirls focus their dress on purpose and function; therefore it becomes an appropriate style for every situation. Events where the cowgirl style of dress was not appropriate were met with extreme resistance.

I was pissed because I had to wear a dress once a [year.] It was obviously an insult to me that someone would die at least once a year and I would have to wear a dress. They did it to slight me.

-Judith, Cowgirl, New Mexico, 30s

SITUATIONAL RULES: FIESTA

Fiesta celebrates the arrival of Don Diego DeVargas and the re-colonization of New Mexico by Spain. Every year there is a Fiesta Council comprised of the Fiesta

Queen, her two Fiesta Princesses, and the Native Princess. They dress in traditional costumes and promote Fiesta for the entirety of the year. Their traditional dress points to a direct correlation between our view of appropriate and good girl dress as related to tradition.

The last couple years we've been trying to bring back a more traditional style of dress for the young ladies and by that I mean the rickrack. This year they have the beautiful rickrack dress and the comments from the community are 'oh they're beautiful. Look at these good girls.' And you hear that because it's taking it back.

-Debbie, New Mexican, New Mexico, 50s

As a costume designer, Debbie's description of the good girl being dressed in traditional garb with rickrack trim gives me a direct visual correlation for the relationship between tradition and appropriateness.

SITUATIONAL RULES: WORK

Dress in the workplace creates a situation where a dress code is enforced or unofficially recognized. Many women expressed a clash between their everyday life and their workplace attire. Appropriate dress within the workplace stifled any unnatural or flamboyant dress. Ashley, a Mexican woman in her early 20s from Texas, described the rules of dress at work enforcing a covering "up your tattoos and any kind of piercings and

your hair had to be a certain color”

Cowgirls work attire was an issue of gender neutrality. Whether you’re a day laborer or working on a Dairy⁷, looking like a woman was a distraction and would result in the Cowgirl not being taken seriously in her job.

If you got dressed up you would get very odd looks and probably not appropriate ones. We were told “Don’t dress up. Put your coveralls on, put your hat on. Don’t put makeup on.”

-Katie, Cowgirl, New Mexico, 20s

In these situations it was the woman’s responsibility to neutralize her gender prominent attributes. If she did not, and the men she was working with either made comments or were distracted from their work, the blame would be assigned to her.

SITUATIONAL RULES: CHURCH

Women from both the Mexican and New Mexican cultures expressed similar sentiments when it came to the rules of dress for Church. Lucille, a New Mexican woman in her 50s from New Mexico described Sundays as “the day you wore you very very best.”

“Church dress” was the clothing that you wore to Church. It could be a special outfit, or just a clean outfit. It was not meant to be revealing or flashy. Your church dress

⁷ A Dairy Farm

was to show respect for the church by being plain, conservative, and covering. “Plain dress was held as a spiritual ideal⁸”(Scott 24)

The major differences in rules for church dress came through generational views. The women who were in the older generation had been raised going to church in strict households and still adhered to those rules of Sunday best clothing. Carmen, a New Mexican woman from Tesuque, New Mexico in her 50s commented on her view of appropriate clothing for church. “I’m kind of old fashioned when it comes to going to mass. I’m not into women wearing shorts. And today it’s perfectly acceptable, but I don’t like it.”

JUDGMENTS

The following portion of my thesis will address one of the questions given to each of my participants. “Have you ever had anyone tell you what you were wearing was inappropriate?” The experience of being told by another that your dress is not appropriate was an experience shared by 46 of the 51 women. It is these external judgments that are made on dress that impacted the choices these women made.

Within the Mexican and New Mexican communities their family members, predominantly brothers, were the ones judging their dress.

⁸ Puritan-Quakers of New England

My brother had to check me out before I went out the door. He says “Is that what you’re gonna wear?” and I said “Yea, that’s all I have.” And he said “No, you get someone to lend you one of those ponchos.” I had to wear a shawl.

-Raquel, Mexican, Texan, 50s

Many of the women who shared that their brothers were possessive over them came from larger families where brothers would act as surrogate parents to their sisters.

When I was younger I remember we’d get ready at my friends houses and she had seven brothers. They would give us so much stuff for makeup. They’d be like “you look like a little tramp, you’d better take that off.” They would make us feel so bad.

-Krystle, New Mexican, New Mexico, 20s

The exceptions were between the, economic and generational divides. Older generations, who were often raised by their grandparents and were considered working class, expressed that to be a bad girl, and to dress like a bad girl was a choice they did not have. Sylvia, a Mexican woman from Texas in her 50s, explained that she “never got in trouble, because that was something you just did not do. You knew better. So no, no one

ever told me what I was wearing was inappropriate.”

Once again the lack of perception that these women possessed agency for their clothing choices was quite narrow.

RESPECT

Leora Tanenbaum, a writer and lecturer on women’s issues, writes in her book Slut! Growing up Female with a Bad Reputation “Women are often seen in terms of their sexual reputation rather than in terms of their personal characteristics” (Tanenbaum 18) Clothing choice is a sign and signal of respect or lack thereof. This respect was directed to yourself, your family, and to your community.

Particularly in Sorority culture the term “representing” is widely used. Cori, a sorority girl living in Portales, New Mexico said “Whenever you go out and everyone sees you, you are representing. You carry that title wherever you go. You always want to hold yourself to the same standard.” Sororities emphasized the group rather than the individual, and the inappropriate dress of one member would reflect poorly on the entire group. Diana, a sorority girl from Texas echoed Cori’s sentiments. “Before I was in a sorority no one really looked at me. I’m in a group now so people judge us as a group not just as individuals.”

Within Mexican and New Mexican cultures respect came from representing your

family. The family reputation and name were bigger than the individual. In that sense Mexican, New Mexican, and Sorority women have a similar structure in common. “I came to understand that out of respect for my father and his family, I had a certain way of living [in Mexico], whether I believed in it or not.” Said Carmen, a New Mexican woman in her 50s.

In all of these worlds the woman’s body was not solely her own. Her dress was emblematic of a larger group and therefore was beyond the scope of her body.

In every generation, the women with more education, more leisure, or more connections to institutions of power – from the church, to the press, to the university – have been the ones who tried to tell other women what they must wear in order to be liberated. (Scott 2)

ADMIRE

“Who is a woman that you know or have known of personally (not a celebrity) that you view as a good girl?” This question delves into a larger topic of how we view ourselves vs. how we view others. Classy, feminine, and beautiful were words most used to describe a positive judgment about the dress of others. Younger generations described the women they admired as their peers: the women they were in fiesta court with or their sorority sisters. Elizabeth, a former sorority girl living in Santa Fe, New Mexico verbalized this by explaining “They would pick stuff that was really pretty and

feminine but really neutral. I definitely admired their style.”

For Mexican and New Mexican women, their mothers and grandmothers were the ultimate definition of a good girl. Family was given the highest value within New Mexican and Mexican women’s lives. “Many [women] evaluate themselves in the gendered terms of their parents.” (Laidler/Hunt 667) It is no surprise that the women who raised them and taught them how to be appropriate best exemplified the good girl definition.

My grandmother lived till she was 98 years old. She taught us what was right and what was wrong, she taught us respect. My grandmother never went out of her house not properly dressed. She was always properly dressed at all times. She went to the beauty shop every Friday and church every Sunday, sometimes to church everyday. She taught me a lot.

-Monica, New Mexican, New Mexico, 50s

Rather than choosing immediate family like the women above, Cowgirls chose an elegant Rancher as the women they most admired. In addition to being beautiful and classy, the admired Cowgirl possessed a skill. Her skill was what deemed her a true “Cowboy.” The good girl Cowgirl was self-reliant and skilled in the cowgirl lifestyle.

She is quite the ranch woman. How she handles that with that much grace and dignity. The women that I admire embrace the spirit of ranching.

What the ranch life is like. From welding to you name it, she has done it all.

-Katrina, Cowgirl, New Mexico, 50s

Chapter 7: Community Sub-groups 2

Internal Influences

BODY IMAGE

How heavier weight can make you more sexualized, easier to be a bad girl and she had fat legs so you know... her skirt would go up. If she was skinny like Twiggy that would have never happened.

-Priscilla, Mexican, Texas, 50s

Self-perception and relative body type (including height and weight) affected the dressing choices in a way that automatically typecast the wearer. Participants commented that a woman's weight affected what clothing was deemed appropriate or inappropriate for her to wear. When asked to define the term inappropriate participants often spoke of an overweight woman wearing a tank top that was either too tight all-over, or too loose at the neckline. Exposing the breasts and/or stomach was a recurring image created when defining the "bad girl" by the participants. Lucille, a New Mexican woman in her 50s, commented that "Skimpier clothing, women with bigger breasts, showing more than they should be showing" was inappropriate.

How heavy a woman, how large her breasts, how big her stomach can affect whether she is deemed a "good girl" or a "bad girl." Participants commented that heavier women were more likely to expose themselves by showing more skin or cleavage than a

skinny woman. Heavier women were somehow broadcasting their sexuality by simply having fuller figures. This correlation between body size and sexuality creates a hypocritical definition of appropriate and inappropriate. Two different women can wear the same outfit. The heavier woman is deemed inappropriate, while the skinny woman is not.

I felt personally, I shouldn't wear anything that was revealing just because it was unflattering you know but I lost the weight. After I lost the weight I'm just like okay, I can wear this even if it's considered too revealing.

-Gloria, Sorority, Texas, 20s

This correlation between the size of a woman's body and her likelihood of being labeled a bad girl relates to the quick-response of a bad girl as associated with sexuality. "A girl with visible breasts becomes sexualized because she possesses a constant physical reminder of her sexual potential" (Thorne, 22). Thin women with small breasts appear prepubescent. Their bodies do not show as evidently the physical signs of their gender. Participants' thoughts of larger breasts and bodies lead them to sexualize the women, and in turn deem their character promiscuous and bad.

RACE

There are certain things that I do specifically so I don't look too Mexican,

like when I wear a lot of makeup a lot of people think I'm trashier and Mexican and I don't like it.

-Ashley, Mexican, Texas, 20s

Some women identified with or reacted in direct rebellion to a perceived group "look." The dress goal for Ashley was not to look Mexican, and she associated the Mexican look with heavy makeup. While Mexican culture deemed heavy makeup appropriate, Ashley deemed it inappropriate in order to distance herself from that specific visual sign.

With Native Americans you're the only group of people that have to prove what I say I am. No one is ever going to question that I'm a quarter German, I can say I'm English, no one is ever going to be like "lets see, lets make sure, lets judge that" but if I fudge that part people will get really offended. There's a number that people have, this is what you are, this is your blood percentage. Putting numbers on people is one step away from genocide, when you have a list of what someone is and their blood quantity, 9 times out of 10 that doesn't lead to a positive effect and it's created a lot of hatred in our community.

-Alex, Lakota Native American, New Mexico, 20s

Speaking of percentages in describing the authenticity of an identity seemed to de-value that individual's culture. While blood quantum brings the focus to validating your native background, those with mixed race families struggled further.

Mixed race participants were aware of the power dress associates with culture. By wearing regalia and braiding their hair, participants asserted power over the visual aspects of their culture to feel included.

Native American culture has a history of defining who is Native and who is not by blood quantum.⁹ The rule of blood quantum is enforced in Native communities; many Native people seeing blood quantum as a way to make sure only "true" Natives received benefits given by the government.

Focus on blood-quantum has left many participants questioning their own native-ness. Many felt the pressure to marry a man with Native blood so that their children would be the correct percentage to be considered native. Other participants expressed anger with the tribal laws of blood quantum.

In my tribe you have to be half native to be considered native. The man I am marrying is not Native, he is white. So automatically my children will not be considered Native. Where is the incentive for me to participate in a culture that has decided my children aren't a part of it?

⁹ Legislation enacted in the United States to define membership in Native American tribes or nations. "Blood quantum" refers to describing the degree of ancestry for an individual of a specific racial or ethnic group

-Amanda, Choctaw Native American, Texas, 20s

All 7 Native participants expressed the above sentiment. The importance of a Native girls actions and physical attributes weighed heavily on her reputation. The Native girl who appeared to be Native, meaning her skin was darker, her hair was dark, and she did not show any physical attributes that belonged to a white society (such as freckles) was deemed the “good girl.” In a world where blood quantum is in place to distinguish the real from the fake Native Americans, the ability to look Native is in your favor.

SEXUAL IDENTITY

The older generation of Mexican women defined a good girl as a quiet girl whose sex and dating life were not discussed. In this situation the clothing of a good girl was not enough. She was expected to not only dress appropriately but to associate with others who followed the same dress and moral codes.

You couldn't talk about your personal life, or your personal things. If you had a boyfriend you couldn't talk about him at all. You were expected to go to school, come home, help around the house, that's it.

-Sylvia, Mexican, Texas, 50s

These women feared the shame they would bring to themselves and their families

if the personal details of their romantic life went public. Shame became the driving force for a woman's reputation. In these situations the only thing a woman could control in her favor was her dress.

I couldn't bring a boy to the house. That was not appropriate. The guy that was going to come home to your house to meet your family was the guy you were going to marry.

-Raquel, Mexican, Texas, 50s

While the older generation recalled their inability to communicate with family about their personal relationships, the younger generation and daughters of the older generation addressed this issue of silence. "My dad cheated on my mom, for 20 years, and we all knew. But you kind of just stay quiet and let it happen" stated Jackie, a young Mexican girl from Texas.

The younger generation seemed to reject the culture of silence and submission. Whether it was keeping quiet about sex, who you were dating, or physical abuse, the younger generation is speaking out and not standing by the traditions of the older generations.

My Mother told me that you don't have to be happy to have a family. That to me just made me realize that her mentality is like so fucked up to me

like, that's the worst advice you can give to your daughter. How are you going to tell her to go back to an abusive husband?

-Nathalie, Mexican, Texas, 20s

While the culture of infidelity in Mexican culture is challenged by the younger generation, they still acknowledge there are specific rules to dating in their hometowns.

You have to compete with the sluts, like if you're going to get a guy they're always going to have wandering eyes even if you dress appropriate and you look good, you're gonna end up alone cuz like there's more sluts.

-Nathalie, Mexican, Texas, 20s

The pressure to compete with the "sluts" fueled women's decisions about dress. Although they knew it was not appropriate, they believed that the appropriately dressed girl was the one who would have her man stolen by a slut. So in order to not have your man taken by a slut, you had to give him what was tempting him by dressing like a slut yourself.

Native American women spoke of dating within their culture as one of the defining factors of a good or bad girl. The good girl would date a Native man, while the bad girl dates non-Native men. The good girl who dates a Native man would be an even better good girl if she dated within her own tribe.

Tribes still bicker and have resentment with certain tribes, like Dakota people are not big fans on Crow... so dating someone who's Crow as opposed to dating someone who's Navajo is very different

-Brittany, Lakota Native American, New Mexico, 20s

An unusual factor in how Native culture views it's community is their approach to teenage pregnancy, or pregnancy out of wedlock. "In western culture it's accidental, it's a mistake and in Native cultures it's not ideal but it's still a blessing and people are still excited" stated Brittany, a young Lakota Native American in New Mexico.

After giving birth the mother is seen as an instrumental player in the continuation of the Native community, a community that many believe is struggling to survive.

In all other cultures interviewed a pregnant teenager was perceived as a "bad girl." Her baby may have been a blessing, but the stigma of bad girl was with her for the rest of her life.

You talk about good girl/bad girl you put yourself in the bad girl category by compromising your integrity and getting in that situation. Getting in that situation of being a single mom is a compromising situation.

-Katrina, Cowgirl, New Mexico 50s

RELIGION

Religion was a driving force in many women's lives as a device for defining appropriate vs. inappropriate clothing. Debbie, a New Mexican woman in her mid-50s from New Mexico described the influence religion has had over her daily life. "I truly believe that [because of] our Blessed Mother, we are more mindful of how we present ourselves in church at events, especially when she's with us because we have respect for her."

Religion acted as an inspirational guideline and a reminder for how to dress; yet for some women it was also a clash between styles of the modern world and standards of their religion.

I come from a strict Mormon background and my grandma is so strict. I have my belly button pierced and when my gram found out, oh, you would have thought that the world had come to an end.

-Briahna, Sorority, New Mexico, 20s

Some of the sorority women identified with a specific religion as a defining factor for joining the sorority, as many sororities have religious and cultural affiliations.

The girls that were joining sororities then, like I came from a religious household and was brought up that way, same as a lot of the girls that pledged Kappa Delta. I think that a lot of those girls [who] were doing that

(participating in religious events), were already inclined to religion and with that we brought the standards of a religion we had already been brought up with.

-Elizabeth, Sorority, New Mexico, 20s

Religion is a factor that not only helped women understand what was appropriate to wear and why it was appropriate to wear (the reasons for why they wore it) but also acted as a shared interest for finding other women with shared values. Sorority life is built on building relationships with women who share similar values and ethics and so a sorority and an organized religious organization operate similarly.

GENERATIONS

How good and bad were defined varied wildly between the younger and older age groups. Mexican women of the older generation were most concerned with their children's welfare, while New Mexican women were most vocal and disapproving of the younger generations dress today. "A lot of spaghetti straps, no coverage, makeup. I think they let these girls at a very young age wear makeup" was Monica's opinion, a New Mexican woman in her 50s.

Regardless of the group, the younger generations were less prescriptive to the definition of a good girl. Regardless of if they practice what they preach, they verbalized dissatisfaction with the generic definition of a bad girl. Autumn, a young Taos Pueblo

Native American woman from New Mexico explained her view as coming from “the generation where I don’t think like smoking weed makes me a bad girl or like going out to party with the girls makes me a bad girl.”

The one constant through both generations was their trust and value of the generation before them. Mexican, New Mexican, Sorority women and Native American women communicated a respect for the lives and advice of elders

The way I think about if for Lakota’s is there are very specific gender roles but they aren’t negative. If you’re an elder person more people will listen to you rather than youth, and that seems to be the more dividing factor.

-Alex, Lakota Native American, New Mexico, 20s

Chapter 8: Questioning

INTERPRETING ANSWERS

The major questions I had going into my thesis were the following:

“If people tell me they identify good and bad in ways that I don’t agree with, what do I do with their information outside of my project?” “ If I was designing for a community that believed ideas about good and bad women as related to their dress, should I costume my characters based on the communities beliefs even If I don’t agree with them?” “Is it my responsibility to use their beliefs as a basis for a visual language, or can I begin to change their assumptions about dress through theatre by challenging their views?” Monica, a New Mexican participant in her 50s confirmed my largest hurdle within this thesis. “The way I see it nowadays, you know, before you would always blame the guy but nowadays the way these girls dress, they’re bad. They’re really bad. The way they dress up, they’re asking for trouble.”

“Even today a common way to damage a woman’s credibility is to call her a slut.”(Tanenbaum 2) The term slut can be a jumping off point for this discussion. I believe that a woman’s dress, deemed slutty or not, does not make her a slut. I do not believe that dressing a specific way, deemed “inappropriate” in a sexual manner by many, is grounds for sexual harassment. This idea perpetuates societies pattern of victim blaming, telling women they are sexually assaulted because of something they wore rather than placing blame on the assaulters. “The ‘slut’ reputation protects rapists because

it makes the victim believe that they are to blame.”(Tanenbaum 9)

The image below is from a SlutWalk march. SlutWalk was first started in Canada as a way to protest victim blaming, much of which involves blaming women for being sexually assaulted because of their clothing. *Slut Walk* intrigues me and is relevant to my project because those who participate are taking a stand for the branded “bad girl” (referred to as a slut) and communicating to the public how they understand what a bad girl looks like.

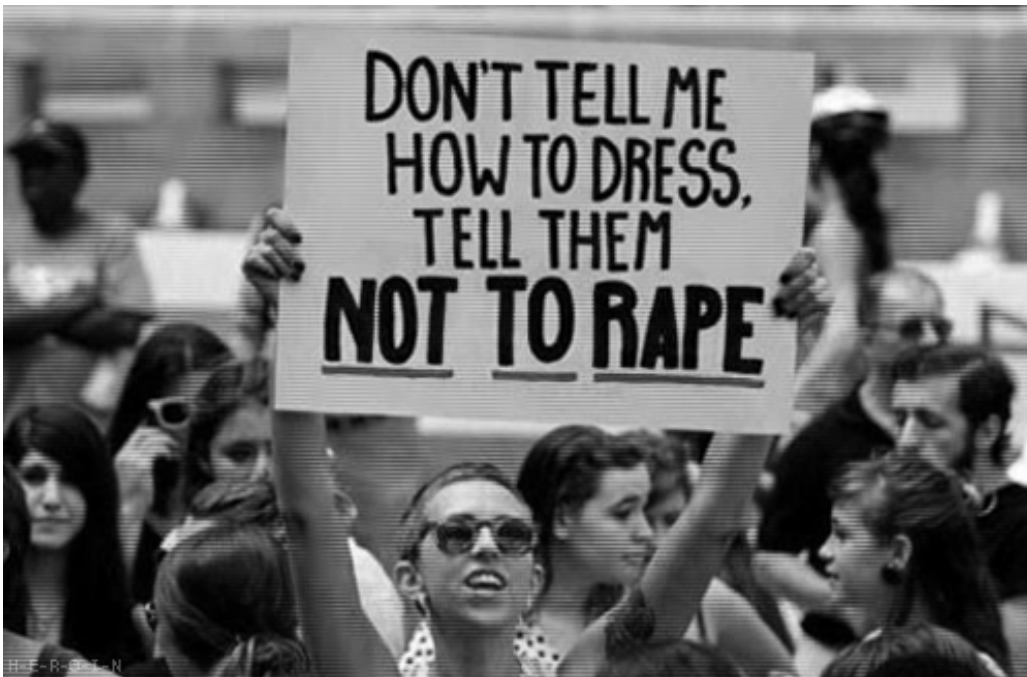


Illustration 2: Protest sign at SlutWalk 2012

THE COSTUME DESIGNERS RESPONSIBILITY

Costume design can, at times, reinforce stereotypes. Not all costume design does this, but when working within a system of signs these signs often stem from stereotypes. The sweet young girl is designed with blonde hair, and the wild woman comes onstage in a red dress. The choice to play into this system of visual understanding is at odds with the values of SlutWalk. This public march tells us that clothing cannot denote anything about a person's character. As a costume designer I bank on an audience understanding a character through their costume (dress.) Where is the line of appropriate and inappropriate representation through dress? When do the unwritten guidelines of costume design become detrimental to the reputation of women?

Chapter 9: Photography and Costume Design

“A critique of capitalism through an attack on pictures and self-decoration. The result was an ideology that deal with significant social problems by blaming them on the images of fashion.” (Scott 7) While the feminists of the 1980's demonized fashion photography, I believe photography has the power to equalize us rather than distract or amplify problems. At this moment allow me to defend my medium of photography. *Good Girl/Bad Girl* serves as the ultimate research project. Not only do I have my photos to document participants' hairstyles, accessories choices, and clothing combinations; I have their voices, thoughts, opinions, and rationale, which is the pulse behind all of their dress choices. Thru the documentary process I aim for other costume designers, clothing historians and sociologists to be inspired, use for their own research, and take initiative when faced with their own modern research projects. One interview with a single woman and her clothing choices told me more about who she was, her culture, and the place she lived more than any text has ever illuminated.

“The photograph can be defined as a message without a code, yet there is actually no photograph without significance.”(Barthes 4) The *Good Girl/Bad Girl* exhibit displayed photos as well as audio interviews. If my photos may lack a code of their own, then the addition of sound amplifies their significance.

Chapter 10: Both Good and Bad

I think, and in most women I think everybody's a good girl but you know they have to prove themselves in other ways depending on their past-being the bad girl, being tough, meaning that you can do it.

-Paula, Cowgirl, Texas, 40s

Paula's quote means two things to me. First, the bad girl image can be chosen for necessity. You can be labeled a bad girl if you chose to do things yourself rather than rely on others. It can be the way you chose to portray yourself to aid in your safety. Secondly, everyone seemed to be both. This sentiment not only occurred during my interviews, but also in my research. "There has never been only one female ideal in the American cultural discourse." (Scott, 22)

Chapter 11: Conclusion

What does a good girl and bad girl look like? This question sparked many lengthy conversations with the participants of this project. The next step to understanding how and why we view good and bad visually is to break those signs down and rebuild. “As teachers and practitioners we need to pay closer attention to what we pass on as ‘cultural’ truth in our work.” (Grady 31)

The cultural opinions expressed in this thesis are the beginning of a deeper discourse that is much needed. As a teacher myself I hope that *Good Girl/Bad Girl* will live beyond this paper and these photos. For the readers and viewers to challenge, re-evaluate and assess their definitions of the visual and action-based good and bad girl. Does she exist? Rather than looking for her in examples of other women, can she be you?

Appendix A: Good Girl/Bad Girl Show Poster

THE COHEN NEW WORKS FESTIVAL
PRESENTED BY THE UNIVERSITY CO-OP
PROUDLY PRESENTS



GOOD
GIRL
BAD
GIRL



MARCH 25-29, 2013
PHOTO & INTERVIEW EXHIBITION
WITH KAITLYN AYLWARD
AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE & DANCE
WINSHIP DRAMA BUILDING 2.120



WWW.COOPNWF.ORG

Appendix B: Mexican Participant Photo



Appendix C: Sorority Participant Photo



Appendix D: Cowgirl Participant Photo



Appendix E: Native American Participant Photo



Appendix F: New Mexican Participant Photo



Bibliography

Estes, C.P. 1992. Women Who Run with Wolves. United States: The Random House Publishing Group

Barthes, R. 1983. The Fashion System. California: University of California Press.

Davis, F. 1992. Fashion, Culture, and Identity. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Edut, O. 1998. Body Outlaws: Rewriting the Rules of Beauty and Body Image. California: Seal Press

Grady, S. 2000. Drama and Diversity: A Pluralistic Perspective for Educational Drama. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann

Laidler and Hunt. 2001. Accomplishing Femininity Among the Girls in the Gang. The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (ISTD)

Levy, A. 2006. Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture. New York: Free Press

Scott, L. 2005. Fresh Lipstick: Redressing Fashion and Feminism. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Tanenbaum, L. 2000. Slut! Growing up Female with a Bad Reputation. New York: HarperCollins Publishing

White, E. 2002. Fast Girls: Teenage Tribes and the Myth of the Slut. New York: Scribner

Wray, T.J. 2012. Good Girls, Bad Girls: The Enduring Lessons of Twelve Women of the Old Testament. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

Wolf, N. 1991. The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women. New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday

Bibliography

INTERVIEWS

Alex. Cowgirl Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Alex. Native American Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Alicia. Cowgirl Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Alyssa. New Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Amanda. Native American Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Ashley. Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Autumn. Native American Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Beth. Cowgirl Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Briahna. Sorority Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Brittany. Native American Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Carmen. New Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Catherine. Cowgirl Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Cori. Sorority Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Crysta. Sorority Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Diana. Sorority Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Diane. New Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Diane. New Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Debbie. New Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Elizabeth. Sorority Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Erika. Native American Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Gabrielle. New Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Gail. New Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Gloria. Sorority Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Gracey. Cowgirl Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Jackie. Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Jenae. New Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Jessica. New Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Judith. Cowgirl Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Kath. Native American Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Katie. Cowgirl Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Kimberly. Sorority Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Krystle. New Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Lucille. New Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Mimi. Cowgirl Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Monica. New Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Morgan. Sorority Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Natalie. Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Olga. Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Pam. Cowgirl Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Paula. Cowgirl Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Priscilla. Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Raquel. Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Shanya. Native American Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Shirley. Sorority Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Stacy. Sorority Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Sylvia. Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Veronica. Mexican & Sorority Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Vicky. New Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Wendy. Mexican Interview, Interviewed by Kaitlyn Marie Aylward.

Vita

Kaitlyn Aylward is a costume designer and teaching artist from Santa Fe, New Mexico. Kaitlyn graduated from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2008 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in fashion design and construction. After graduation Kaitlyn lived in both New York and Santa Fe where she worked for Stella McCartney, Cynthia Rowley, and The Santa Fe Opera. In the fall of 2010, Kaitlyn began her graduate studies in The Department of Theatre and Dance at The University of Texas at Austin. Kaitlyn has designed for theatre, dance, film, and opera.

Email: kaitlynaylward@gmail.com

This thesis was typed by Kaitlyn Aylward